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Faithel



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"I met warrior maids clad in leopard skins, tattooed from head to foot and giving no ground to witchers in mastery of the blade."

—The Wonders of Zerrikania

The **Faithel**, or as they are known in Zerrikania **Draig Faitalii** ([Zerrikanian](#): *Dragon Keepers*), are an elite warrior caste of women whose sworn duty is to seek out and protect dragons across the Continent. They hail from Zerrikania, a land to the far east, renowned for its robust trade, blazing climate, and matriarchal society. The Faithel are often confused by Nordlings for Free Warriors, but while an individual Faithel may also be of Free Warrior origin, only Faithel travel outside of Zerrikania regularly. Faithel undergo specialized training beginning at 15 years of age, but as is custom in Zerrikania many girls have been training in various forms physical

The Order of the Faithel



A pair of Faithel on duty.

Information

Status

Active

combat and horsemanship from as early as seven.

They are considered the finest fighters in the kingdom and are the source of the claims from outsiders that Zerrikanian warrior women are among the greatest swordwielders in the world, matching even witchers in terms of raw skill.

Country	Zerrikania
Residence	Varied
Progenitor	Dragon Temple Guardians
Affiliation(s)	
Culture	Zerrikanian

Contents	[hide]
1. Overview	
1.1. Training	
1.2. Divine Duties	
1.3. Relationship with the Dragon Temples	
1.4. Faithel Tattoos	
1.4.1. Sacred Markings	
2. History	
2.1. Precursors	
2.2. Official Founding	
2.3. Present Iterations	
3. Notable Faithel	
4. Notes	
5. Trivia	

Overview

Training

Faithel begin their training at 15 in the Temple of Zerrikanterment, seated at the heart of the Oasis. The Faithel order is exclusively female and does not permit boys entry. Because many girls already have some level of martial prowess going into their training, only the best of the best are permitted to become Faithel. For the next ten years, Zerrikanian girls face demanding challenges meant to strengthen their minds, bodies, and spirits. They learn the deeper history of Zerrikania, memorize the names of every Dragon of the pantheon, and visit every temple where there is a divine dragon residing. By the time they are young women of twenty, three quarters of the girls that first petitioned to join the order have been dismissed. Once they reach the age of twenty-five, their training is considered complete, and they qualify to begin their trials at the First Blood Tournament. Every half a year after they've finished their training they participate in the tournament, and at its conclusion only the best two fighters are chosen. The pair receive a third belt of tattoo, are anointed by priestesses of the Temple of Zerrikanterment, blessed by the Queen, and are then permitted to call themselves Faithel. It is at this point that many go on to travel the Continent in search of dragons to serve, going as far as Ofir, The Dragon Mountains, and even Haakland.

Divine Duties

Faithel are primarily tasked with the distinguished honor of seeking out dragons all across the Continent to protect, and if the dragon wishes, escort it back to Zerrikania so that it may establish its own temple and amass a clutch of followers. Occasionally, a pair of Faithel may become bonded to a dragon egg, gifted by a temple dragon or discovered abandoned in their travels. It becomes the duty of the pair to either bring the dragon egg back to a temple with a matching divine dragoness presiding, or work with the priestesses of an independent temple to protect and tend to the egg until it hatches. Once this occurs, the pair of Faithel become immediately honor and duty bound to protect and care for the dragonling for the rest of their lives, following it wherever it goes, and tending to its every need.

Relationship with the Dragon Temples

The Faithel have a positive, working relationship with the Dragon Temples of Zerrikania. When not actively seeking out dragons to serve, many Faithel fulfill her duty and serve instead as the temple guards for the many holy sites of the Dragon Cult scattered across Zerrikania, operating as the primary martial branch of the Dragon Cult, and serving directly at the pleasure of the High Priestess. Some Faithel are content to remain temple guards, maintaining the proud history of the origins of their order. Likewise, the priestesses are encouraged to foster positive relations with the Faithel, relations that very often go beyond platonic. Faithel are freely given all the many services offered by the priestesses, including the acquisition of room and board, food, healing, and counseling.

Faithel Tattoos

The tattoos of the Faithel are distinct. Often the ink used varies in color, both in accordance with the achievements that earned her the tattoos, or the color of the dragon she serves. Faithel receive three 'belts' of tattoos in the lead up to becoming fully-fledged Faithel, the placement of which is chosen by the tattooist. Each belt is comprised of symbols that signify special deeds, and is itself in completion a marker of the milestones achieved along their path to becoming Faithel;

- **First Belt:** *Received at the end of their fifth year, marking the midway of their journey, and in celebration of them as among the few who managed to persist long enough to be considered worthy of the hardships to come.*
- **Second Belt:** *Received at the end of the tenth year, marking the end of their training and the beginning of their trials.*
- **Third Belt:** *Received only by the pair that win the Blood Tournament, marking them as fully fledged Faithel and permitting them to begin their holy mission.*

Over the course of their lives, Faithel will continue to expand their tattoos, gaining a new one for every new feat performed in service to the order. The circumstances by which a Faithel will gain a new tattoo vary, but usually entail the achieving something significant. A fourth belt of tattoo is given after a Faithel pair pledge themselves to a dragon and thereafter will record their accomplishments while in the dragon's service on their skin.

Sacred Markings

A Faithel tattooist is expressly forbidden from teaching their art to anyone who is not an ordained apprentice of the temple they serve, nor are they permitted to give Faithel tattoos to those who are not of the order. Tattooing oneself in the fashion of the Faithel, or a tattooist caught giving these markings to someone who is not Faithel, is considered an apostate. The punishment for defying this holy ordinance is severe, for both the tattooist and the individual receiving the illicit markings. An apostate-tattooist is not only branded in such a way as to permanently mar the eye-band of their own markings, but also has the index finger of both hands removed, so as never to be able to repeat the offense. The tattooist is then stripped of all regalia denoting them as Faithel, their possessions are seized by the temple they once served, and their name is stricken from the temple records. The disgraced tattooist is then permitted a satchel of basic supplies and a horse, before being exiled from the city. Anyone who received illicit tattoos, is captured and taken to the temple to have their marks burned off. They are then released, if they are female. The tattooing of a man results in death for both.

History

Precursors

The origins of the Faithel can be traced back to the founding of the first Dragon Temples of Zerrikania in the early 300s. They began as the militant branch of the clergy, ordained holy warriors tasked with guarding not just the temples, but the priestesses, and all of the donated tithe. As more dragons began to forge bonds with and establish their presence amid the temples, the temple guards chose from among their number the most elite to act as the retinue of the resident divine dragon. Over the centuries the temple guards became colloquially known as the *Draigg'ungada* ([Zerrikanian](#): *Dragonguard*) and expanded beyond

the temple to the neighboring settlements as the enforcers of common law. While the most elite of the dragonguard remained close to the high priestess and the temple, lower ranking dragonguard served a similar function to town and city guards.

Occasionally, at the behest of a priestess or the request of their local monarch, a company of dragonguard would set out on expeditions to seek out dragons throughout Zerrikania, in an effort to expand the pantheon of living divine dragons.

Official Founding

In the mid 9th century, the high priestess of the Temple of Zerrikanterment, Saulrenith became renowned for seeking out and joining dragons to temples without divines. She and a company of six elite temple guards were responsible for expanding the living pantheon of Zerrikania's Dragon Cult to heights never before seen. Where once the pantheon was comprised of the long dead Zerrikanterment, and a handful of living dragons, nearly every major city in Zerrikania boasted a temple bonded with a divine dragon. Collectively, Saulrenith and her six dragon guard were called *Draigg Faitalii* ([Zerrikanian: Dragon Keepers](#)) and set out in an expedition to the Northern Kingdoms, in the hopes to find the dragons there and in the process spread the Dragon Cult beyond the borders of Zerrikania. Sadly, the Nordlings were not keen on her proselytizing and after only four years, Saulrenith and only three of the six Faithel returned to Zerrikania.

Upon their return, Saulrenith told of all she had seen in the Northern Kingdoms, of how the men there ruled over their women with cruelty and how they and alongside a number of the elder folk had hunted the dragons of their lands to near extinction, greedily taking their hordes, and even using the blood and bodies of dragons for profane rituals. She urged the then-queen to amass a force of Dragonguard to venture back to the Northern Kingdoms and attempt to combat the slaying of the North's dragons. Her petition became the basis by which the Order of the Faithel was officially formed, with the first Faithel school taking her name at the sanction of the queen. From then on, in an attempt to combat even the fiercest threats to dragonkind, the Order of the Faithel set about training the greatest of an already elite warrior class.

Present Iterations

As of the turning of the 13th century, the Order of the Faithel remains strong, though their excursions into the North have dwindled. Because the dragon population of the Northern Kingdoms and Nilfgaard did take such a heavy toll before the founding of the order, Faithel became far rarer than they once were outside of Zerrikania in the centuries that followed. None the less, the tradition continues, and every year extraordinary young women join the esteemed ranks of the *Draigg Faitalii*.

Notable Faithel

- [Alvéaenerle](#)
- [Téa](#)^[1]

Notes

- This is a **FAN-MADE Expansion** of the lore of [The Faithel](#), as described in Andrzej Sapkowski's works, and of the lore on [Zerrikania](#), as described in CDPR's Witcher game series, the Gwent stand-alone, and R. Talsorian's Zerrikanian DLC for the Witcher TRPG.
- This fanon intentionally deviates from the history proposed by *Wiedźmin: Gra Wyobraźni*.

Trivia

- This fanon not only took inspiration from and expanded on the Scythian influence found in Sapkowski's original works, but also took inspiration from other egalitarian and matriarchal cultures and warrior classes including the Amazigh, the Tuareg, and the Akashinga.

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